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Ingenium par materiæ——— Juv.

Thursday, July 23. 1713.

WHEN I read Rules of Criticism I immediately enquire after the Works of the Author who has written them, and by that means discover what it is he likes in a Composition; for there is no question but every Man aims at least at what he thinks beautiful in Writing. If I find by his own manner of Writing that he is heavy and tasteless, I throw aside his Criticisms with a secret Indignation, to see a Man without Genius or Politeness dictating to the World on Subjects which I find are above his reach.

If the Critick has published nothing but Rules and Observations in Criticism, I then consider whether there be a Propriety and Elegance in his Thoughts and Words, Clearness and Delicacy in his Remarks, Wit and Good-breeding in his Raillery; but if in the place of all these I find nothing but Dogmatical Stupidity, I must beg such a Writer's Pardon if I have no manner of Deference for his Judgment, and refuse to conform my self to his Taste.

So Macer *and* Mundungus *School the Times,*
And Write in rugged Prose the softer Rules of Rhimes.
Well do they play the careful Criticks part,
Instructing doubly by their matchless Art:
Rules for good Verse they first with Pains indite,
Then shew us what are bad, by what they write.

Mr. Congreve *to Sir* R. Temple.

(Price Two Pence.)

The greatest Criticks among the Ancients are those who have the most excelled in all other kinds of Composition, and have shown the height of good Writing even in the Precepts which they have given for it.

Among the Moderns likewise no Critick has ever pleased, or been looked upon as Authentick, who did not show by his Practice, that he was a Master of the Theory. I have now one before me, who after having given many Proofs of his Performances both in Poetry and Prose, obliged the World with several Critical Works. The Author I mean is *Strada*. His Profession on the Stile of the most famous among the Ancient *Latin* Poets who are extant, and have written in Epic Verse, is one of the most Entertaining, as well as of the most just Pieces of Criticism that I have ever read. I shall make the Plan of it the Subject of this Day's Paper.

It is commonly known, that Pope *Leo* the Tenth was a great Patron of Learning, and used to be present at the Performances, Conversations and Disputes of all the most Polite Writers of his time. Upon this Bottom *Strada* founds the following Narrative. When this Pope was at his *Villa*, that stood upon an Eminence on the Banks of the *Tiber*, the Poets contrived the following Pageant or Machine for his Entertainment. They made a huge floating Mountain, that was split at the top in Imitation